

REMARKS

The Official Action mailed October 6, 2004, has been received and its contents carefully noted. This response is filed within three months of the mailing date of the Official Action and therefore is believed to be timely without extension of time. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that this response is being timely filed.

The Applicants note with appreciation the consideration of the Information Disclosure Statements filed on July 10, 1997, October 3, 1997, June 4, 1998, February 10, 2000, April 17, 2000, May 16, 2000, June 16, 2000, August 20, 2001, July 7, 2003, February 2, 2004, February 25, 2004, and July 6, 2004.

Claims 13-15, 21, 24-29, 35-40, 42, 45, 47-49 and 56-70 were pending in the present application prior to the above amendment. The Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of claims 13-15, 21, 24-29, 35-40, 42, 45, 48, 49 and 56-70 (page 3, Paper No. 09302004). The Official Action rejects claim 47 as obvious based on the combination of U.S. Patent No. 5,200,847 to Mawatari et al. and U.S. Patent No. 5,278,682 to Niki. The Applicants do not agree that claim 47 is obvious in view of the alleged combination of Mawatari and Niki; however, claims 47-49 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer at this time in order to permit the issuance of the allowable subject matter of the present application. Accordingly, only allowed claims 13-15, 21, 24-29, 35-40, 42, 45 and 56-70 are now pending in the present application, of which claims 25, 35, 40, 42, 56, 61 and 66 are independent.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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